



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

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DEAR CALIFORNIA VETERAN, VETERAN LEADER OR VETERAN SUPPORTER:

We need your URGENT SUPPORT of Assembly Bill 1077 (Wesson).

In the past, many veteran advocates have offered their help for projects on behalf of veterans. California veterans and the California Department of Veterans Affairs now have an urgent need, and we are asking for your help in supporting the enactment of Assembly Bill 1077, by Assembly Member (and Speaker Emeritus) Herb Wesson.

AB 1077 will provide an additional \$100 million in Lease Revenue Bond authority to fully fund (along with USDVA partnership grant funds) all five California Veterans Homes currently in the planning stages. The five new homes will be built in Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, Fresno and Redding. This bill is necessary to avoid further delays, reductions, or elimination of these much-needed Veterans Homes. AB 1077 would also preserve California's status on the USDVA Priority One list for funding needs, and reaffirm California's commitment to its 2.3 million veterans. **AB 1077 is the *only* piece of legislation that will fully fund all five Veterans Homes with the support of Governor Schwarzenegger, the Department of Veterans Affairs and a bipartisan coalition of legislators.**

We urge you and any other veterans advocates (and any veterans organizations you may be a member of) to contact key members of the California Legislature by phone, letter or email at your earliest convenience because the Legislative session is almost finished for the year. They will be wrapping up by August 31, 2004, or sooner. Attached is a listing of key Legislators, including their names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses.

If your organization is unable to provide its official endorsement in support of this bill on such short notice, we would urge you, as an individual, to contact key legislators in support of AB 1077.

Also attached is a Background Briefing on this issue for your additional information.

Thank you for your support of California veterans and our much-needed new Veterans Homes. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the CA Dept of Veterans Affairs at 916.653.2192.

SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS CONSULTANT TO RETIRE: MORROW COMMENDS DAVID GRAFFT FOR HIS SERVICE

SACRAMENTO – Today, Senator Bill Morrow (R-Oceanside) honored Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee consultant, David Grafft, with a Senate Resolution on the Senate Floor. Mr. Grafft, who has served as a consultant to the committee for more than ten years, plans to retire before the beginning of the new legislative session.

"David has been an invaluable asset not only to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, but to all of California's veterans," said Morrow. "His experience and broad knowledge of veterans' issues made him a veritable one-stop-shop of information."

Mr. Grafft became the consultant to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in 1992, and has served under a total of three committee chairs – Senator Rogers, Senator Johannessen, and Senator Morrow. As a consultant, he analyzed veterans related legislation, prepared the chair for committee hearings, researched issues for legislators and their staff, as well as assisted veterans with their individual problems.

"I cannot thank David enough for his service to this state on behalf of veterans," Morrow said. "I am certain all will agree with me that he is irreplaceable."

A veteran himself, Mr. Grafft first served in the United States Navy during the Korean War, and then in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. He retired as a Major, and is an active member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and The Retired Officers Association.

Upon retirement, David and his wife of 47 years, Mary, will live in their present home in Elk Grove, California.

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER SIGNS AB 3000, WHICH EXTENDS VETERANS HOME ADMISSION PRIORITY TO EX-POWS

The Veteran Homes of California are open to all eligible veterans who are residents of the Golden State. State law has given priority admission status to Medal of Honor recipients. California Code of Regulations, Title 12, also contains criteria for urgent or priority admissions based upon social, economic hardship, age and disability needs. AB 3000 (Mountjoy) extends veterans home admission priority to veterans who were POWs.

Under current law, all residents of the Veterans Homes of California who receive an Aid and Attendance (A&A) stipend from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are required to provide this subsidy to the homes as part of their required contribution. AB 3000 exempts residents of domiciliary units from having to provide their A&A stipends to the veterans home in which they live. California is committed to veterans, and as proof, it is worth noting that this bill did not receive a single no vote on its journey through the Legislature.

This California Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored bill will take effect on January 1, 2005.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOURCES

Here is an excerpt from an article, which ran in the San Diego Union-Tribune on July 17th.

FORMER 'BUM' BEATS THE BOTTLE

Army veteran was part of infamous underground video

By Michael Stetz, Staff Reporter

The tattoos are still there, across his knuckles, spelling "Bumfight." Rufus Hannah wants them gone one day. But first things first. First thing this day, as is the case every day, is no more drinking. No more waking up and reaching for a bottle. No more downing 12-packs of cheap beer before noon. No more falling prey to losers who gave him money and booze to do stupid, humiliating things – like ramming his head into a wall – as he did more than two years ago in the underground shock video "Bumfights." Three young men made the video, which they sold on the Internet for \$20 a copy. Filmed mostly in the San Diego area, it caused outrage and landed the producers, including a La Mesa teen, in court.

To access the complete article please visit the San Diego Union-Tribune's website at:

http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040717/news_1m17fights.html

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